

Luzon, Visayas grids on red alert for second day

THE Luzon and Visayas grids were again placed under red alert on Thursday after plant outages reduced available generating capacity below peak demand levels, prompting the dispatch of natural gas-fired power plants to support grid stability.

In separate advisories, the National Grid Corp. of the Philippines (NGCP) placed the Luzon and Visayas grids under red alert from 3 p.m. to 10 p.m.

Yellow alerts were also raised over Luzon from 2 p.m. to 3 p.m. and 10 p.m. to 12 a.m. on May 15. The Visayas grid was likewise placed under yellow alert from 10 p.m. to 11 p.m.

A red alert is issued when available power supply is insufficient to meet consumer demand and required operat-

ing reserves. A yellow alert is declared when operating reserves fall below the required contingency level.

According to NGCP, a total of 4,459 megawatts (MW) was unavailable to the Luzon grid as several power plants remained offline. As a result, available capacity fell to 12,464 MW, below peak demand of 12,877 MW.

The grid operator said the Tayabas-Ilijan 500-kilovolt (kV) line and the Dasmariñas-Ilijan 500-kV line were restored at 2:44 p.m. on May 13, allowing affected plants to synchronize back to the grid.

Meanwhile, available capacity in the Visayas grid stood at 2,377 MW, below peak demand of 2,552 MW, after a total of 902.7 MW of capacity went offline.

In a statement, Energy Secretary Sharon S. Garin directed all generation companies involved to immediately resolve plant issues and return facilities to full rated capacity.

“The DoE’s top priority is to protect consumers and maintain grid stability. We have directed all concerned generation companies to expedite the restoration of affected units at the soonest possible time,” Ms. Garin said.

Amid the large capacity shortfall in the Luzon grid, major natural gas plants in Batangas were tapped to reinforce supply, according to Energy Undersecretary Rowena Cristina L. Guevara.

Ms. Guevara said the gas-fired power plants operated by Prime CoreGen, a

subsidiary of Prime Infrastructure Capital, Inc., were “actively dispatched” during the alert period.

Prime CoreGen currently operates First Gen Corp.’s natural gas plants, including the 1,000-MW Sta. Rita Power Plant, the 500-MW San Lorenzo Power Plant, the 450-MW San Gabriel Power Plant, and the 97-MW Avion Plant, following their P50-billion acquisition deal last year.

“Sta. Rita and Ilijan units exhibited sustained high utilization, EERI (Excellent Energy Resources, Inc.) units showed stable mid-to-high loading, San Gabriel operated at moderate levels, and Avion units remained at relatively low but consistent output levels,” Ms. Guevara said.

However, insufficient electricity supply prompted NGCP to implement manual load dropping, or rotational power interruptions, in parts of Luzon and the Visayas to maintain grid integrity.

Affected areas included parts of Metro Manila, Albay, Baguio City, Benguet, Ilocos Norte, Batangas, Isabela, and Cagayan.

The outages also affected parts of Cebu, Negros Island, Panay Island, Leyte, Samar, Biliran, and Bohol.

In areas served by Manila Electric Co., the country’s largest private electric distribution utility, nearly 1.9 million customers were affected during the first red alert notice issued on May 13. — **Sheldeen Joy Talavera**

Motorcycle sales surge as crisis drives shift to cheaper transport

MOTORCYCLE SALES rose nearly 20% to 178,557 units in March as rising fuel costs pushed commuters to find cheaper transport alternatives, according to a report by the Motorcycle Development Program Participants Association (MDPPA).

MDPPA said motorcycle sales in March rose by 19.9% year on year to 178,557 units.

In the first three months, 496,868 motorcycle units were sold, up 11.6%.

February sales had risen 7.1% to 151,608 units, while January sales were up 7.8% at 166,703 units.

Reporting sales were MDPPA members Honda Cars Philippines, Inc., Kawasaki Motors (Phils.) Corp., Suzuki Philippines, Inc., and Yamaha Motor Philippines, Inc.

“Automatic motorcycles continued to dominate the market, driven by their ease of use and suitability for daily commuting,” MDPPA said.

The group also noted strong growth in business motorcycles amid sustained demand for delivery services and smaller firms that rely on two-wheeled vehicles for operators. Results for mopeds and street motorcycles, however, were mixed.

MDPPA noted that motorcycles have become a key driver of economic activity and jobs, especially in industries like logistics and the gig economy.

The group expects sustained demand for motorcycles in the coming months.

“As fuel prices continue to rise, motorcycles remain a viable option for Filipinos looking to manage their daily commute and expenses. For many, they offer a fuel-efficient and cost-conscious option that still allows them to move freely, get to work on time, and keep their livelihoods running,” MDPPA President Erwin Estrada said. — **Beatriz Marie D. Cruz**

DA assures farm imports only during shortages, price spikes

AGRICULTURE Secretary Francisco P. Tiu Laurel, Jr. told legislators that food imports will be authorized only to fill in gaps in domestic supply and during episodes of price instability.

“Imports are not our first resort — they are our last line of defense,” Mr. Laurel said during a House Committee on North Luzon Growth Quadrangle hearing on Wednesday. He said every import decision is weighed against impacts on farmers, consumers, and long-term food security.

He added that the Department of Agriculture (DA) is strengthening forecasting

systems to anticipate supply gaps earlier and harmonizing data with the Philippine Statistics Authority to improve production planning.

“We will not normalize imports,” he said in a statement. “They will only be deployed when supply truly fails, prices spiral, and consumers are at risk. Our priority is simple: strengthen local agriculture first, and import only when absolutely unavoidable.”

To address climate risks, the DA is expanding greenhouse farming, constructing water impounding and storage systems, and

deploying drip irrigation and solar-powered irrigation systems across key production areas, as well as crop diversification.

The measures target North Luzon’s over 2 million hectares of farmland — covering Regions 1, 2, and the Cordillera Administrative Region — which the DA identified as critical to national supply.

Mr. Laurel noted water stress remains among the most persistent threats to food security, particularly with a severe El Niño projected later this year. — **Pierce Oel A. Montalvo**

PHL deemed most vulnerable in ASEAN due to extreme temperatures, weather

THE PHILIPPINES is the Southeast Asian country most exposed to extreme temperatures and weather, putting the agriculture and food industries at risk, an industry group said.

“Among five of the largest ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) countries — Vietnam, Thailand, Indonesia, Malaysia, and the Philippines, the Philippines is the most vulnerable to the rising temperatures and extreme weather,” Anna Beatrice B. Baldonado, public affairs manager (Philippines) for Food Industry Asia (FIA), said at a briefing on Thursday.

Climate change was responsible for a 6% increase in the

country’s food prices in the last decade, according to a report, “The Economic Impact of the Agri-food Sector in the Philippines,” issued by Oxford Economics.

Climate-driven weather events and energy transition costs may drive up the region’s food prices by as much as 59% in the coming years, the report also noted.

“This is because of both its exposure to typhoons, floods, and heat stress, as well as its weaker capacity to buffer shocks in domestic production,” the think tank said.

Ms. Baldonado noted that uncertainties in US’ trade policy and the energy crisis could also accelerate food inflation.

“In an increasingly challenging operating environment, food price inflation is one of the major risk for the sector itself. Being a net importer, and with the US being one of our largest trading partners, definitely we will be affected,” she said.

Food inflation accelerated to 6.1% in April from 2.7% a month earlier and 0.7% a year earlier, driven mainly by rice prices, the Philippine Statistics Authority reported.

“We should expect, in the next couple of years, more disruption to the open and rules-based trading system, not just regionally but also globally,” she said.

The report also noted a global GDP could be reduced by 2.3% by global trade uncertainties.

In 2025, the agri-food industries accounted for \$164.6 billion of Philippine gross domestic product (GDP), Oxford Economics said, generating \$20.7 billion in tax revenue and 18.8 million jobs.

Agricultural production contributes \$55.4 billion to national GDP, while food & beverage manufacturing and distribution contributes \$71.3 billion and \$37.9 billion, respectively.

Oxford Economics was commissioned by the ASEAN Food and Beverage Alliance and the FIA to conduct the study. — **Beatriz Marie D. Cruz**

Palay farmgate prices rise in April

THE FARMGATE price of palay (unmilled rice) rose 29.2% to an average of P23.31 per kilogram in April, the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) said in a report.

Price growth accelerated from the 27.6% seen in March. Month on month, the palay farmgate price fell 2.2%.

All 15 rice-producing regions posted year-on-year growth in average farmgate prices last month. Caraga prices rose 61.4% to P24.07 per kilo. The lowest farmgate price was recorded in the Negros Island Region, where it was P24.91 per kilo, up 5.4%.

Raul Q. Montemayor, national manager of the Federation of Free Farmers, said wholesale and retail prices started to rise in December 2025 due to reduced rice inventories, particularly imported stocks, following the import ban that started in October.

President Ferdinand R. Marcos, Jr. had approved a two-month extension of the rice import ban through the end of the 2025 to stabilize farmgate prices for palay.

When the ban was lifted in January, prices continued to increase because of high demand for, and delayed arrival of, imported stocks, Mr. Montemayor said via Viber.

Jayson H. Cainglet, executive director of the Samahang Industriya ng Agrikultura, said via Viber: “The supposed P23 per kilo palay

price this month is a good price for our rice farmers, but in other areas, farmgate prices were still hovering between P17-19 per kilo.”

He added that the harvest season is almost over, and the capping of P50 per kilo on imported rice will have little impact on palay prices.

“What is more important to highlight is that this price cap on imported rice is a continuing admission of the failure of unprecedented level of imports to reduce retail prices of rice,” Mr. Cainglet said.

Since Executive Order 62 was imposed almost two years ago, only importers and traders have benefitted from tariff reductions, he added.

“As it is, a growing percentage of rice farmers are opting not to plant this next cropping,” Mr. Cainglet said.

Mr. Montemayor said that based on 2024 PSA data, projected surges in fuel and fertilizer prices alongside impending El Niño-induced drought conditions are expected to drive production costs up to P19.29 per kilo, an increase of nearly P5 over the previous year.

“Farmers will have to sell their palay at P24.29 per kilo so that they can recover costs and earn P5/kilo. Even then, their net income per hectare will only be around P20,533, nearly half of what they earned in 2024.” — **Pierce Oel A. Montalvo**

More PPP segments deemed an option for Mindanao railway

THE Department of Transportation (DoTr) said it is exploring the possibility of an expanded role for public-private partnerships (PPP) to fund the Mindanao Railway project, in place of the original plan involving Chinese financing.

“We had a previous funder, then (it didn’t go ahead). So now, same status... we are looking for a different funder and (updating the) feasibility study,” Transportation Undersecretary Timothy John R. Batan told reporters.

“A public-private partnership is being considered; that is an option,” he said, adding that if the PPP route is not taken, the project might also be presented to the Japan International Cooperation Agency or Asian Development Bank.

The PPP option is already being pursued for the third phase of the rail project.

The Mindanao Railway was previously set to be funded through official development assistance from China.

Mr. Batan said that the DoTr created a joint working group with the Mindanao Development Authority to work on projects in the region.

He said the DoTr is still uncertain when groundbreaking for the project can begin, as the government is still determining how to fund it, adding that he does not expect any progress on the financing front within the year due to the need to update the feasibility study.

Mr. Batan said the current feasibility study was based on 2018 data.

“We have to update the ridership assumptions (and our) cost estimates,” he added.

Last month, the PPP Center said that the pre-feasibility study for the third phase of the Mindanao Railway project was completed. — **Justine Irish D. Tabile**

PHL exploring Turkish B2B deals to supply manufacturing inputs

TRADE Undersecretary and Board of Investments (BoI) Managing Head Ceferino S. Rodolfo said Turkish firms are being sounded out to supply the Philippines with manufacturing inputs.

The potential tieups were discussed at a roundtable with the Istanbul Chamber of Commerce (ICOC) on April 30, the BoI said.

The ICOC offered to support business-to-business (B2B) matchmaking, facilitate company linkages, and host Philippine delegations, the BoI said.

The BoI also discussed the possibility of an ICOC business mission to the Philippines, the BoI said.

“The Philippines reaffirmed its readiness to work closely with ICOC in creating success stories through permanent business linkages, investment facilitation, and long-term commercial partnerships that move beyond episodic engagement and toward sustained economic cooperation,” it said. — **Beatriz Marie D. Cruz**

Career Opportunity in **AD POWERPLANT SERVICES OPC**

POSITION TITLE: EQUIPMENT PERFORMANCE EMISSION CONTROLLER

JOB DESCRIPTION:

- *Monitor equipment operating conditions, fuel consumption, productivity, and efficiency.
- *Analyze machine performance data and identify abnormalities or inefficiencies.
- *Perform emission testing and smoke opacity monitoring for diesel-powered equipment and vehicles.
- *Work closely with maintenance teams to schedule repairs and preventive maintenance activities.
- *Generate equipment performance reports and emission compliance records.
- *Ensure proper use of lubricants, filters, and fuel management practices.

QUALIFICATION:

- *Fluent in At least One foreign language and English (spoken and written)
- *Strong analytical and troubleshooting skills
- *Attention to detail
- *Good communication and reporting abilities
- *Ability to work under pressure and in field operations

Applications may be sent to:
Email: Hr@adpsopc.com

COMPANY / EMPLOYER	NAME OF FOREIGN NATIONAL INTENDING TO APPLY FOR THE POSITION
COMPANY NAME: AD POWERPLANT SERVICES OPC ADDRESS: UNIT 312A, AIC GRANDE TOWER, GARNET ROAD ORTIGAS CENTER SAN ANTONIO PASIG CITY 1605, METRO MANILA NATURE OF BUSINESS: OTHER SERVICES	NAME: RAJU, SRINIVASAN ADDRESS: ISABELA LUNA 3304 NATIONALITY: INDIAN INTENDED PERIOD OF EMPLOYMENT: THREE (3) YEARS

AD POWERPLANT SERVICES OPC, hereby declares that the above-named foreign national is able, willing and qualified to perform the services and job description for this position. The company has the intention to employ the said foreign national and apply for an **Alien Employment Permit with the Department of Labor and Employment- National Capital Region** located at **967 Maligaya Street, Malate Manila**

Career Opportunity in **AD POWERPLANT SERVICES OPC**

POSITION TITLE: INSTRUMENTATION INSPECTION AND ASSESSMENT MANAGER

JOB DESCRIPTION:

- *Logic development and programming in DCS
- *Diagnose and trouble shoot various automations
- *To Make planning of preventive maintenance and annual maintenance of biomass power plant.
- *Lead and manage the instrumentation inspection and assessment team.
- *Develop and implement inspection programs for all instrumentation assets

QUALIFICATION:

- *At least 10 years' work experience
- *Knowledge of calibration tools and test equipment.
- *Excellent communication and leadership skills.
- *Proficient in report writing and data interpretation
- *Leadership and team management
- *Problem-solving and analytical thinking
- *Strong interpersonal skills to coordinate across departments and with clients

Applications may be sent to:
Email: Hr@adpsopc.com

COMPANY / EMPLOYER	NAME OF FOREIGN NATIONAL INTENDING TO APPLY FOR THE POSITION
COMPANY NAME: AD POWERPLANT SERVICES OPC ADDRESS: UNIT 312A, AIC GRANDE TOWER, GARNET ROAD ORTIGAS CENTER SAN ANTONIO PASIG CITY 1605, METRO MANILA NATURE OF BUSINESS: OTHER SERVICES	NAME: ARUMUGAM ELANGOVAN, CHANDIRASEKARAN ADDRESS: C4 BATAAN COMPOUND, BATAAN SAMAL NATIONALITY: INDIAN INTENDED PERIOD OF EMPLOYMENT: THREE (3) YEARS

AD POWERPLANT SERVICES OPC, hereby declares that the above-named foreign national is able, willing and qualified to perform the services and job description for this position. The company has the intention to employ the said foreign national and apply for an **Alien Employment Permit with the Department of Labor and Employment- National Capital Region** located at **967 Maligaya Street, Malate Manila**

Career Opportunity in **AD POWERPLANT SERVICES OPC**

POSITION TITLE: EQUIPMENT PERFORMANCE AND EMISSION CONTROLLER

JOB DESCRIPTION:

- *Monitor equipment operating conditions, fuel consumption, productivity, and efficiency.
- *Analyze machine performance data and identify abnormalities or inefficiencies.
- *Perform emission testing and smoke opacity monitoring for diesel-powered equipment and vehicles.
- *Work closely with maintenance teams to schedule repairs and preventive maintenance activities.
- *Generate equipment performance reports and emission compliance records.
- *Ensure proper use of lubricants, filters, and fuel management practices.

QUALIFICATION:

- *Fluent in At least One foreign language and English (spoken and written)
- *Strong analytical and troubleshooting skills
- *Attention to detail
- *Good communication and reporting abilities
- *Ability to work under pressure and in field operations

Applications may be sent to:
Email: Hr@adpsopc.com

COMPANY / EMPLOYER	NAME OF FOREIGN NATIONAL INTENDING TO APPLY FOR THE POSITION
COMPANY NAME: AD POWERPLANT SERVICES OPC ADDRESS: UNIT 312A, AIC GRANDE TOWER, GARNET ROAD ORTIGAS CENTER SAN ANTONIO PASIG CITY 1605, METRO MANILA NATURE OF BUSINESS: OTHER SERVICES	NAME: ANTONY SAMY, THILIPAN RAJA ADDRESS: C4 BATAAN COMPOUND, BATAAN SAMAL NATIONALITY: INDIAN INTENDED PERIOD OF EMPLOYMENT: THREE (3) YEARS

AD POWERPLANT SERVICES OPC, hereby declares that the above-named foreign national is able, willing and qualified to perform the services and job description for this position. The company has the intention to employ the said foreign national and apply for an **Alien Employment Permit with the Department of Labor and Employment- National Capital Region** located at **967 Maligaya Street, Malate Manila**